

Our Mission Bands

MISSION BAND LESSON

A TRIP TO INDIA

I wonder if the boys and girls of the Mission Bands would like to take a trip to India and see for themselves just what the country we talk so much about is really like. We will sail up the mighty Arabian Sea, dock at Bombay, and lo! we are really in India. It is surely a new world we are gazing upon. Strange dark-eyed people with brown faces and black hair, wearing queer brilliantly colored clothes, and talking and gesticulating in a foreign tongue are everywhere present. We should like to stay and explore this great city where the European and foreign are so mingled, but we shall at once board our train for three days' journey across the country to the India of our Telugu Mission. You must all be prepared for a surprise! We have always thought of India as a warm country, but do you notice how cold it is growing? We are almost shivering in our thin summer clothing! We are travelling up, up and over the Western Ghaut mountains, and before morning we shall be very glad of the warm clothing provided for our use in the sleeping car.

When morning comes we will see that we are descending the mountains, and on the third day we will find ourselves rolling away over beautiful gray green plains, miles and miles of it, just like a soft green velvet-carpet. We have arrived in India at the time of the growing rice. Every one of those fields are rice fields, and every blade was planted by hand in knee deep mud and water. "Oh!" you exclaim, "I did not know that rice looked like that. What a lot of people it must take to plant it all!" Yes, indeed it does, but when you remember that there are four hundred million people in India you will understand how such vast fields can be planted by hand.

Now we will notice away in the distance a range of hills, they are Eastern Ghaut mountains again, which we crossed in leaving Bombay. They are about thirty miles away now, but as we near the northern part of our Telugu country they come nearer and nearer until they seem a very short distance

from us. The hills seem to rise straight up from the plains and do not slope up gradually as our hills do. This gives them a very impressive appearance to one seeing them for the first time. "Oh see the palm trees over there! How tall and straight their trunks are with the big leaves at the top! They look something like umbrellas or grown up toadstools, don't they? How many there are along that stream we see in the distance. Perhaps if we were nearer we should see some dates growing in them. What fun it would be to climb them and get the dates to eat!"

"What a queer flock of animals we see feeding over in that field. They look like goats." Well they are goats. Some of the Indian farmers keep large herds. Part of them are for giving milk and others are killed for their meat. They sell it in the Bazaars and call it mutton. In the other field you will see some buffaloes feeding. They also give milk and the Indian people like it as well as cow's milk. They use the buffaloes for drawing loads and plowing. How odd it would be to hear your father say some morning, "Now boys, harness the buffaloes, and we will plough the south field."

We are nearing Parlakimedi, one of our northern stations, and we will leave the train and visit Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Freeman, the missionaries there. Mr. and Mrs. Glendenning have lived there a number of years, too. Mr. Glendenning works among the Savara people on the hills, but lives in the town, as so far malarial conditions make it unsafe for a white man to live in the Hills.

We all crowd to the windows of the car to see what Parlakimedi is like. "See the beautiful white palace up there on the hill, what fine towers it has, and how wonderful the trees." Yes, that is the Raja's summer palace. Look over that high brick wall and you will see his town house or palace. The street it is on is called Palace Street. Away at the other end is the Raja's College. They are both built in European style. The hills press close to the town and are very imposing and grand as they stretch up and up several thousand feet high. Miss Maud Harri-